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Cover Photograph: COLONEL GEORGE GORING. *From a painting after Van Dyck in the National Portrait Gallery.*

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THE SIEGE OF PORTSMOUTH IN THE CIVIL WAR

John Webb, MA, FRHistS

DURING the early months of 1642 the long-drawn-out war of words between King Charles I and Parliament was slowly transformed into a war of weapons. In March, when Sir John Oglander, a steadfast loyalist and former Lieutenant-Governor of Portsmouth, recorded in his commonplace book at Nunwell the birth and baptism of his grandson and eventual heir, he added sadly, 'He was born in a miserable distracted time.' [1]All over the country men of local influence and power like Oglander were having to decide for themselves which of the many statements and orders issuing regularly from both sides their consciences allowed them to accept. 'Now', wrote Sir Thomas Knyvett, a practical East Anglian squire who surveyed the rapidly-changing political scene, 'there is so much declared as makes all officers in the kingdom traitors of one side or the other.' During late spring and early summer, while the king and his retinue moved uncertainly about the North seeking moral support in town and country, John Pym and his fellow M.P.s increasingly took control of events. Resolving at last that the time had come to gather a military force, they appointed as Captain-General the dependable, if lethargic, Earl of Essex, whose more vigorous cousin, Robert Rich, Earl of Warwick, had already secured for Parliament the services of the navy. By mid-July a state of civil war virtually existed, although it was not until 22 August, when Portsmouth was already under siege, that the king formally raised his standard at Nottingham.

The great importance of holding what Clarendon described as 'the strongest and best fortified town then in the kingdom' was manifestly apparent to both Charles and Parliament during the last months of peace. Situated in the south-west corner of the flat, pear-shaped isle of Portsea, which was linked to the mainland by Portsbridge (to the east of the modern crossing of that name), Portsmouth dominated the narrow entrance to the spacious harbour, on the other side of which lay the small fishing village of Gosport. To the north of the town and separated from it by the muddy tidal creek known as the Mill Pond was the royal dockyard, which had grown up round Henry VII's revolutionary dry dock. To the south-east, on the southernmost tip of the island, stood Southsea Castle, from which guns commanded the shore-hugging shipping channel into the harbour. Although always important as a naval centre, Portsmouth had been particularly favoured by the early Tudor kings. A period of comparative neglect had followed, but Charles I's reign had seen signs of a slow revival. In 1642, in its triple role of fortress, dockyard and key to the magnificent harbour, the town was obviously an important prize which both sides would try to secure. The king, rebuffed at Hull, unable to rely on the loyalty of the principal ports, and deprived of Thames-side with its commercial and naval facilities, undoubtedly hoped that its possession would give him a military headquarters in the South and a gateway through which could come the men and supplies which he expected daily from his friends abroad.

Charles's loss of the navy, however, if permanent, would seriously reduce the importance of a Royalist Portsmouth, and this likely development must have dominated the thoughts of the local victuallers and merchants. Portsmouth without ships would be like a bank without money, and its adherence over a prolonged period to a party which did not control the fleet would lead to unemployment and economic decline. One may be certain that whatever political views they happened to hold, the leading burgesses were eager to continue to enjoy the sight of captains and crews passing regularly along Point and supply boats plying back and forth across the Camber.

The man upon whom rested the responsibility for deciding Portsmouth's allegiance during the impending war was the Governor, Colonel George Goring, the thirty-four-year-old son of Baron Goring, afterwards Earl of Norwich. The complex personality and military achievements of this officer, who later became one of the king's principal generals, still await detailed investigation by historians. Married at twenty-one to the third daughter of the Earl of Cork, from whom he had received a dowry of £10,000, he had, within a short time, amassed such large debts that he had been forced to seek his wealthy father-in-law's assistance. Like many of his contemporaries, he had attempted to find an outlet for his energies in the wars in the Low Countries, and there, in 1637, at the Siege of Breda, he had been wounded near the ankle and permanently lamed. A little later, during the two brief and ignominious campaigns against the Scots, he had added to his store of military experience.

If to his duties as Governor of Portsmouth from 1639–42 Goring brought more than a casual knowledge of soldiering, he also brought serious imperfections of character. To the king's adviser and publicist, Edward Hyde, later Earl of Clarendon, his behaviour from first to last seemed 'devious, uncertain, and unprincipled', and 'shed disgrace upon the nobleness of his name, and upon the honourable profession of

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[1]Oglander's observations, edited by Francis Bamford, have been published in *A Royalist's Notebook* (London, 1936).

Colonel George Goring (right) and Mountjoy Blount, Earl of Newport, by Van Dyck. From the Petworth Collection.
(Photograph by Photo Studios Ltd.)

soldier'. Of him, too, he wrote, '. . . on account of his private vices of drunkenness, cruelty, and rapacity, and of his political timidity and treachery, scarcely anyone was more unworthy to be trusted with any important matters for counsel or execution'.

The weight of Clarendon's monumental prose has borne heavily upon Goring's reputation during the last three centuries. That he had many of the vices attributed to him there is no doubt. A quarrelsome, erratic, and in many ways immature man, lacking self-control and unable to subordinate himself completely to the common good, his drinking habits were notorious. Sir John Oglander tells in his commonplace book of the memorable visit to the Isle of Wight in 1639 of Goring's friends, Lord Portland, Captain of the island, and his brother Nicholas. One August day they crossed to Portsmouth, and with the colonel 'drank and shot, shot and drank, till they were scarce *compos mentis*. Then they all came into the island, where they did the like. I may truly say that in the space of six days there was never so much powder fired except against an enemy.' On several further occasions during this visit these excitable young men amiably quaffed together. Oglander describes them at Sandham Castle early in September, 'at every health tearing at one another's bands and shirts, insomuch as linen was very hard to be found amongst them'. Later that day, coming home by Newport, 'they got a ladder and drank healths at the top of the cage [i.e. gallows], and there Goring made a recantation speech for his former disorders and wished the people, of which they had store about them, to take example by him how they came to that place'. Oglander concludes his account of these escapades with the note: 'The powder that was shot here and at Portsmouth in the space of 8 days was better worth than £300.' High spirits and boisterous behaviour by young men are common enough in any age, but Goring's excessive fondness for the bottle seems to have increased over the years, and the habit which no doubt helped sometimes to provide a refuge from the recurring pain of his leg wound gradually undermined his health, so that in the later stages of the war he was a seriously sick man.

In spite of his many shortcomings, Goring was undoubtedly an attractive figure who had inherited many of the courtly qualities of his father. Even the highly-critical Clarendon was forced to admit grudgingly that he was 'a person very winning and graceful in all his motions', and there is a touch of envy in his catalogue of the colonel's charms. 'He had a civility which shed itself over all his countenance, and gathered all the eyes and applications in view; his courage was notorious and confessed; his wit equal to the best and in the most universal conceptions; and his language and expression natural, sharp, and flowing, adorned with a wonderful seeming modesty, and with such a constant and perpetual sprightfulness and pleasantness of humour, that no person had reason to be ashamed of being disposed to love him, or indeed of being deceived by him.' Such qualities endeared him to the poets. His rumoured death on one occasion moved Davenant to write a dialogue in which, 'in manners and in fate', he was compared to Sir Philip Sidney, and he and some of the most celebrated of his riotous circle were the subject of two poems on 'The Gallants of the Times'. A lively drinking song, 'To General Goring after the Pacification at Berwick', by his friend Richard Lovelace, not only praises his glories, which

'shine so brave and high', but also extols the beauty of his 'lovely bride' Lettice, 'Whose eyes wound deep in peace, as doth his sword in wars'.

There is no doubt, also, that on the field of battle he could be a clever opponent, capable of brilliant flashes. Of him Sir Richard Bulstrode said, 'He was, without dispute, as good an officer as any [who] served the king, and the most dexterous in any sudden emergency that I have ever seen.' Clarendon spoke of 'the presentness of his mind and vivacity in a sudden attempt, though never so full of danger', but went on to add that in an enterprise 'that required more deliberation and must be attended with patience and a steady circumspection . . . his mind could not be long bent'. It was this inability to plan coolly and methodically, and to subordinate his own whims to greater strategical considerations, that proved to be the fatal flaw in Goring's generalship. Yet, even so, two of the leading military historians of our time have pointed out that 'we cannot lightly dismiss a man who put to flight half the immense allied army at Marston Moor', and conclude that despite all his faults 'He had . . . the makings of a great leader of men, and as a supreme commander with a free hand, he would probably have made a great name for himself'.[1]

In his personal conduct and management of garrison affairs during the year before the outbreak of hostilities Goring showed the worst side of his character. A familiar figure at Court and like his father a special favourite of Queen Henrietta Maria, the young officer was to all appearances a stalwart supporter of the Royalist cause. More than once during 1641 he seems to have made it clear to the queen that in an emergency he would put Portsmouth at her disposal as a place of refuge in easy contact with the continent. Not surprisingly, when a group of discontented army officers plotted to give the king military support if his position should weaken further, they were successful in recruiting Goring to their number. However, upon learning that there was disagreement over a proposal to make him Lieutenant-General, he not only carried out his threat that 'If he had not a condition worthy of him, he would have nothing to do with the matter', but went even further, secretly revealing the details of the plot to some of the leading figures in the Lords while still keeping in communication with the dissidents. From those in the North he received at Portsmouth on 10 April a letter of support which had been carried down by Captain James Chudleigh, with whom he walked round the walls, at one point remarking that 'if there should be any mutiny in London, the queen meant to come down thither for her safety, and that she had sent him down money to fortify it'. Early in May, amid rumours that Portsmouth was soon to be taken over by a force of French, John Pym, who had been informed of the Governor's revelations, thought it wise to give details of the Army Plot to his fellow Parliamentarians. Still believing in Goring's loyalty, Queen Henrietta Maria decided to put herself under his protection, but, at the last moment, while her carriage stood waiting at the door, she was dissuaded from attempting such a rash act. Within a very short time she learned the harsh news of the colonel's betrayal, and, after his own part in the design had been investigated to the satisfaction of the Commons and his governorship confidently confirmed, it seemed that Portsmouth had been irrevocably lost to the Royalist cause.

During these months Goring appears to have been making an effort to put the previously-neglected town defences into some state of readiness, although events were to show that he was either too late or too half-hearted to achieve much success. In September 1641 he wrote to Sir John Oglander seeking help. 'For the speedier finishing of the works begun here', he informed him, 'we have present want of a dozen of tumbrels. If you shall please to assist the bearer hereof in the procuring of them with all speed, you will, besides the service you do His Majesty herein, put a particular obligation upon your most affectionate servant, George Goring.' Timber, also, is known to have been brought from the island some time earlier for constructional purposes. Parliament, trusting the Governor implicitly, readily promised to supply him with £3,000 'to relieve the great necessities and defects of the garrison of Portsmouth'. In November, however, there was fresh cause for alarm. Letters from Hampshire warned the two Houses that all was not well in the town. Among other things, it was alleged that a post went between the queen and the Governor several times weekly, and 'the Papists and jovial clergymen thereabouts were merrier than ever'. Goring, who was Member for Portsmouth, was immediately summoned by his fellow M.P.s to answer the charges made against him. The aggrieved officer hastened to London 'with that undauntedness', comments Clarendon, 'that all clouds of distrust immediately vanished, insomuch as no man presumed to whisper the least jealousy of him'.

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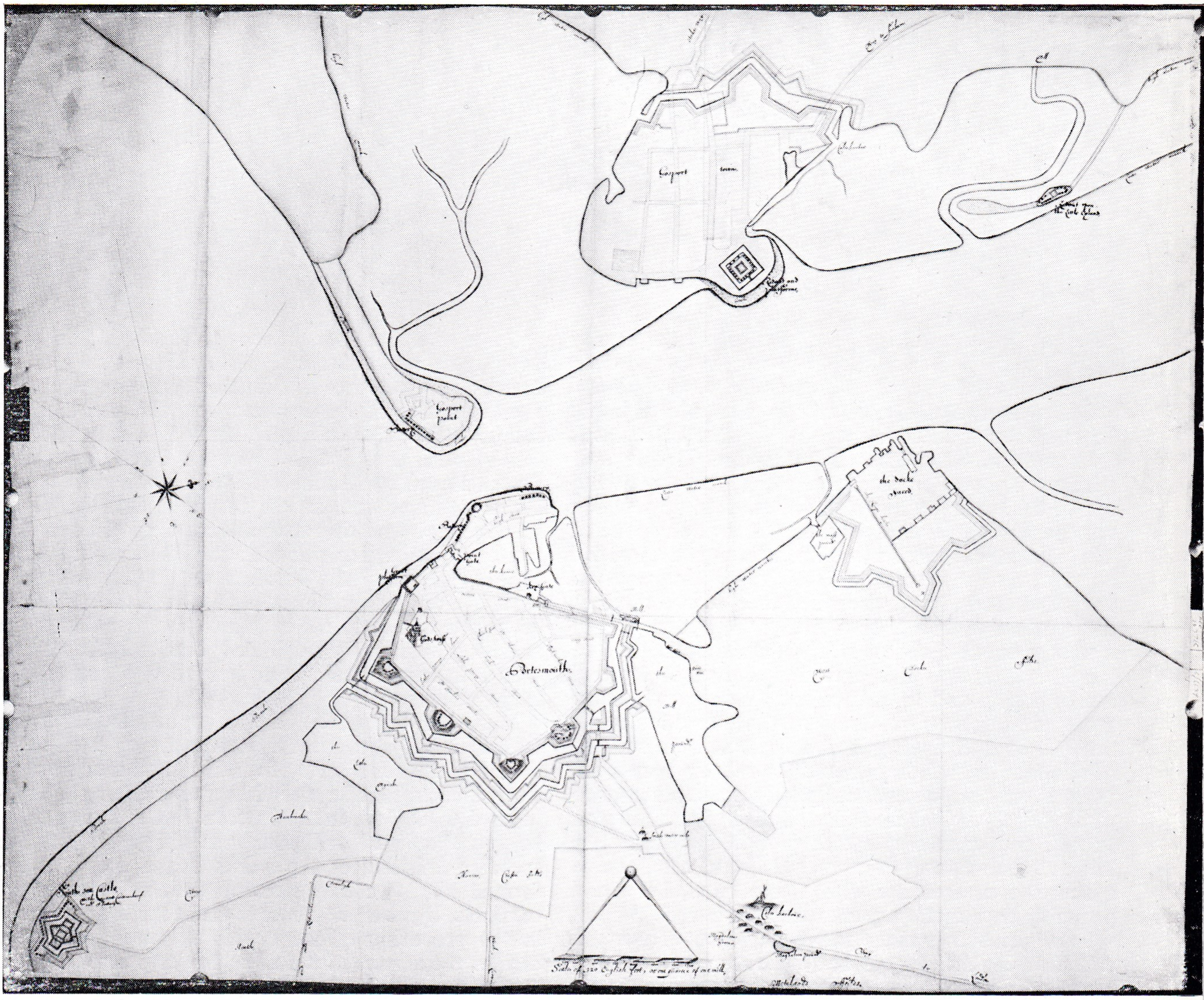
[1] Alfred H. Burne and Peter Young, *The Great Civil War* (London, 1959), p. 232.



Portsmouth and Gosport, from a working map of 1668 by Sir Bernard de Gomme, a Dutch engineer who, during the reign of Charles II, completely remodelled the Portsmouth fortifications. Although the old line of the walls was retained, the ramparts and bastions were improved and a complex system of outer defences added. Southsea Castle was also strengthened and new fortifications built at Gosport and round Portsmouth Dockyard.

In his speech of defence Goring answered the charges one by one. A French Roman Catholic chirurgeon, it had been alleged, had been brought in to serve the garrison. This he did not deny. The man had attended the Earl of Holland during the war against the Scots in 1639 and had been able to give beneficial advice to Goring 'in respect of his own lameness'. As a reward for his professional skill he had been offered a post at Portsmouth. On another count, that he had tried, against the orders of the custom officers, to transport three geldings to France, he readily acknowledged an attempt to 'do a courtesy' for a French gentleman. He admitted, too, that he had received from the Low Countries arms for twenty horsemen, but thought these a very small provision for the personal use of the Governor of such an important place.

These particular acts, it was readily acknowledged after Goring had spoken, were nothing more than the indiscretions of a highly independent young officer. Of much greater concern were the fears aroused by his building operations at Portsmouth. His accusers had said that the sea defences had been seriously neglected and allowed to fall into decay, while on the landward side, commanding the town, new fortifications were being built upon which he was placing brass ordnance taken out of naval vessels. Goring, drawing on his military experiences in the Low Countries, patiently explained to the House the technical reasons why so much work was being done on the Mount. It was not a new construction, he explained, having been begun some years earlier, when it had been known as Fort Mountjoy. He had acted upon

(Map reproduced by courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum.)

the most expert advice available and was convinced that it was in the best position for the defence of the town. There was nothing secret or sinister in his actions. He had, in fact, some months earlier, at the house of the Earl of Essex, fully explained his plans to Sir Walter Earle, now one of his accusers, who was also aware that the removal of the guns from the fleet to the fort had been done on the orders of the Master of the Ordnance. As for the sea defences, Goring denied that they were weak and reported that for greater strength he had added a 'dally' at the mouth of the haven.

The members were convinced. For the second time within a few months Goring, consummate actor and superb public speaker, had been cleared by the House. He received 'so generous an applause', says Clarendon, 'that, not without some little apology for troubling him, they desired him again to repair to his government, and to finish those works which were necessary for the safety of the place'. They 'gratified him with consenting to all the propositions he made on behalf of his garrison, and paid him a good sum of money for their arrears'. Moreover, he was given a private assurance, later put into effect, 'that he should be Lieutenant-General of the horse in their new army when it should be formed'.

At the same time the two authors of the letters which had started the scare now came in for sharp criticism. One was an unnamed inhabitant of Portsmouth who had written to a London merchant. The other, also anonymous, had corresponded with Sir Walter Earle and was generally believed to be his son-in-law, Colonel Norton of Southwick Park, who later took a leading part in the siege. There was some talk of requiring them to compensate Goring for the libels they had spread, 'but the House conceived they were persons so mean and unworthy that they could not make reparation fit for a person of his worth to have, and therefore gave directions the letters should be burnt'.

At this distance of time it is impossible to disentangle all the twisted threads of Goring's skilful double-dealing, but it is clear that despite his full-throated allegiance to the Parliamentary cause during the last months of 1641, he was also in secret contact with the sovereign, whom he continued to assure of his loyalty. Once again, it seems, Charles believed him. Money for military expenses at Portsmouth now flowed in from both sides. Facts and figures are confused, but there is good evidence that on one occasion the queen sent him at least £3,000, probably much more, which she had raised from the sale of her plate and some of her jewels. During the spring and early summer of 1642 there are no overt signs of Parliamentary mistrust of Goring, and as late as 12 July Sir Philip Stapleton was ordered by the Commons to write 'to satisfy him with the clear opinion this House has of him and of his worth'.

But the king's confidence in the Governor remained unshaken. In mid-June, in a document drafted at York, Goring received express orders to safeguard the town and the magazine, which 'is of very great consideration to the peace and quiet of this our kingdom', and was informed that 'we are well satisfied of your fidelity and care in that important service'. He was required to take control of all the gunpowder in Portsmouth and see that none of it was used except in the defence of the town. Furthermore, he was to take over the *Henrietta Maria*, a pinnace of sixty-eight tons which normally carried a crew of twenty-five, and use it in any manner he thought necessary to meet attack, 'with further authority to land the guns thereof and employ them for any land service you shall have occasion'. He was also empowered to build fortifications in any place on Portsea Island where he thought they were required and, since more foot and horse soldiers might be needed for the defence of the town, 'we likewise authorise and give power to you to make and appoint the several officers to the several companies so to be raised. And we likewise hereby authorise you . . . that upon any extraordinary occasion you command such number of our train-bands . . . in the places adjacent to march into our said town as may be answerable to the said danger you shall conceive our said town to be in.' In the light of subsequent events it is interesting to note the warning to Goring 'to be most careful for preventing of mutiny within the said town' by seeing that 'no person reside within the said town or be of the said garrison as you shall find disaffected to our service by refusing to obey our just and legal commands'. The Governor was also required to reside in Portsmouth 'and not to stir from thence without our particular directions signified unto you . . .' Further royal dispatches were sent from Leicester on 25 July. These repeated some of the previous instructions and went on to urge Goring to show the 'utmost care and vigilancy in discharge of a trust so important to the safety both of us and our whole kingdom'.

During the next few days events moved rapidly. With the king's commission in his possession and the arrival in the town of forty loyal horsemen armed with carbines and pistols, Goring decided to make public at once his undivided allegiance to the Crown. According to Clarendon, this premature declaration

forced the king's hand, making it necessary for him to embark on war 'before he was in any degree ripe for action'. Whatever may have been the consequences for Charles, Goring's action was undoubtedly a sudden and unwelcome blow to Parliament, which as recently as 12 July had issued warrants for the payment of £5,030 for garrison purposes. Yet, despite this display of faith, it seems that new seeds of mistrust had already been sown at Westminster and were producing a rich crop of rumours in the weeks before Goring's declaration. Once more there had been talk of the Governor's close contact with men known to be loyal to the king, and some of his intimates had indiscreetly revealed alarming information about his alleged designs. It had been noted, too, that in recent months he had failed to travel to London despite many letters from his Parliamentary colleagues urging him to do so. Excuses, even from such a glib tongue, were no permanent solution, as Goring must have realised when Lord Mandeville, 'his most bosom friend', wrote counselling him to pursue at once the offer of high command in the Parliamentary army, adding 'that if he did not come to London by such a short day as he named, he found his integrity would be doubted, and that many things were laid to his charge, of which he doubted not his innocence . . .' So, feeling unable or unwilling to defer a decision any longer, Goring penned 'a jolly letter' of reply in which he stated that since he had been advised that Parliament was acting illegally, 'he might incur much danger by obeying all their orders'. He had received the command of the garrison from King Charles and dared not leave the town without his permission. At last the mask of deception was off.

Events at Portsmouth at the time of Goring's public declaration of his loyalty are described by a contemporary pamphleteer. He tells how, on Tuesday, 2 August, the Governor summoned all those within the town who were capable of bearing arms to assemble during the afternoon, 'at whose appearance he made this speech unto them'. The highly polished oration which follows no doubt owes as much in literary style to the anonymous reporter as to the colonel, although it probably preserves the spirit of his call to arms. After reminding the men of their duty to the monarch, he appealed to them through their purses:

> 'And for you that are behind of your pay, although the Parliament hath made some promise to see you satisfied, yet such is the case and goodness of His Majesty towards you,

Portsmouth Point, with the dockyard in the background. The fortifications at the bottom of the picture are at the harbour entrance.

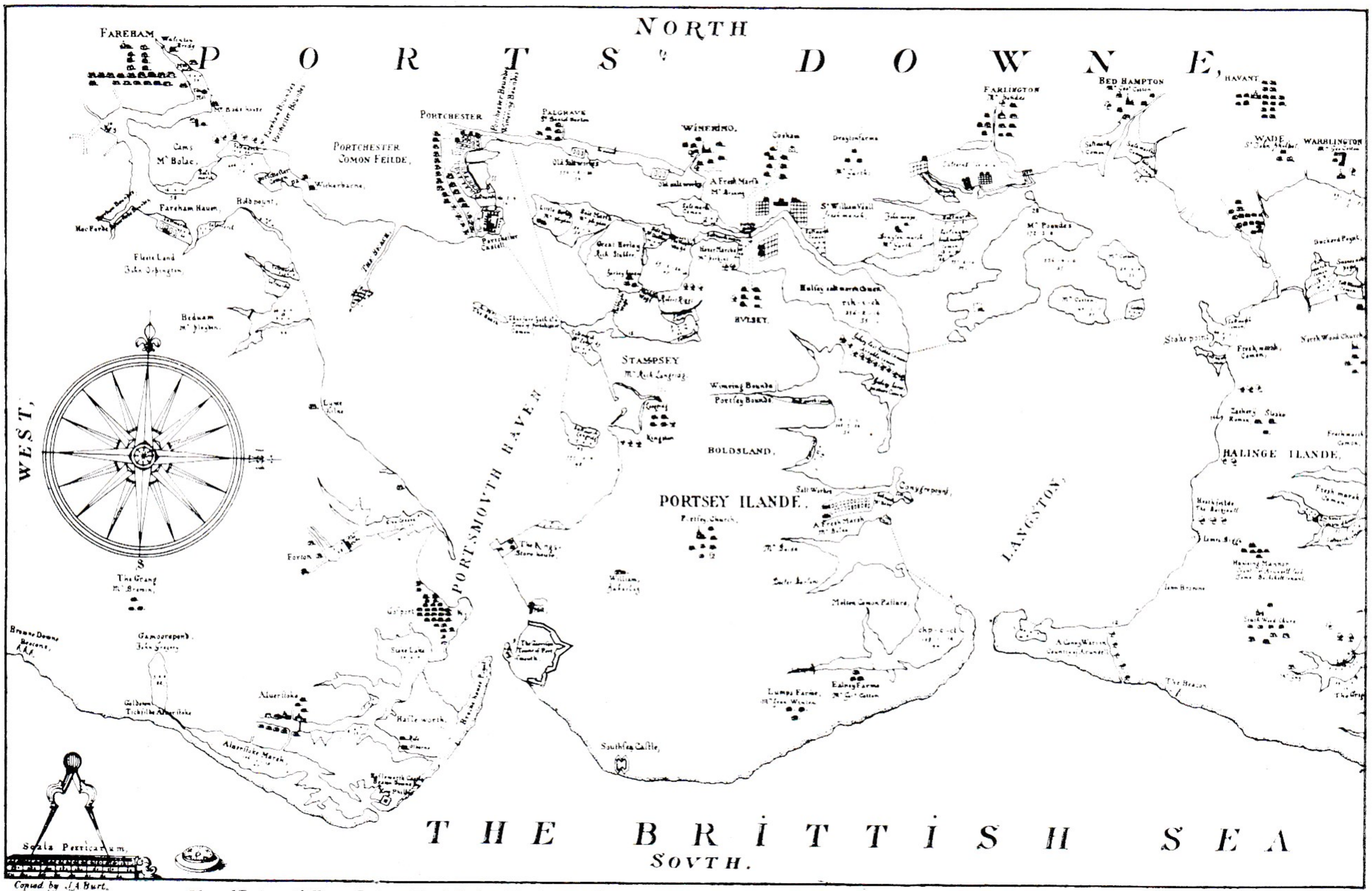
(Photograph by courtesy of Portsmouth and Sunderland Newspapers Ltd.)

> that he hath provided you money, which I have in my custody to distribute amongst you so soon as you have subscribed to some few words and conditions in writing which I shall tender unto you, testifying your religious, honest, faithful, and ready intention to serve His Majesty in this business. Neither will I constrain or force any to stay in the town against their wills or free pleasure, but every man of what condition soever shall have free liberty to go and come with his wife and children, servants, and goods in safety and peace. And let every man assure himself that for his faithful service herein His Majesty will not see him unrewarded.'

When he had ended, says the writer, 'some of the soldiers gave a great shout, the rest were discontented, and a great distraction was suddenly in the town'. Several other observers confirm that he was willing to discharge those who did not agree with his course of action and refused to take the required oath. The number of defaulters was said by some to be quite substantial, although the officers present later put it at only three or four. After his address to the military, Goring assembled the Mayor and townsmen and made a similar declaration. That this series of events brought confusion there is no doubt, although the town records are unfortunately silent on the official response. In a news-letter published a few days later at the command of Parliament, it was stated that 'the inhabitants of the town are resolved to stand firm in their obedience to the Parliament, and withall to oppose as far as in them lies any forces that shall be brought in . . . that shall take part with the malignant party . . .' Most of the burgesses were undoubtedly more sympathetic to Parliament than to King Charles, but information on this important matter is limited. The Mayor and his brethren were men who normally could not be easily browbeaten. As recently as the previous April the Hampshire High Sheriff's two bailiffs, who had been sent to Portsmouth to proclaim the treason of the king's adviser, Lord Digby, had been committed into custody by the Deputy-Mayor and threatened with a whipping. Even the Sheriff himself, on coming to the town, had received similar insults, and had afterwards complained bitterly of the 'obstructions and great affronts' he had encountered. But the circumstances of such a quarrel, apparently over town privileges, were very different from those which prevailed during the critical days after Goring's declaration. The townspeople, on the horns of a dilemma, knew that if they expressed their disapproval by leaving Portsmouth, their houses and property would almost certainly be looted by the garrison riff-raff, and this was undoubtedly a strong reason for compliance, if only until the reactions of Parliament were known. Some of the women and children were evacuated at an early stage, and others, but not all, were required by Goring to depart when the close siege of the town became an imminent reality.

Both Houses heard the news of Goring's treachery on 4 August. It is not difficult to imagine the anger and dismay that they must have experienced. One of the most important citadels in the kingdom had been lost. Believed to be immensely strong, its recovery would inevitably be a difficult and costly operation, particularly as the garrison commander was an energetic officer whose military experience they obviously respected. Joint consultations produced three immediate decisions. The first was to send a messenger to Portsmouth to summon Goring to deliver up the town and journey to London to answer for his conduct, which they thought merited a charge of high treason. The second was more practical. Recognising the close connection between Portsmouth and the Isle of Wight, they removed from office Goring's 'familiar friend', the Earl of Portland, 'suspected to be a Papist', and appointed in his place as Governor the more reliable Earl of Pembroke who, acting mainly through a deputy, ruled the island during the next few years. Finally, they resolved that the Earl of Essex, their military commander, 'shall forthwith appoint officers to levy horse and foot . . . and march to Portsmouth', and, should Goring prove to be obstinate, 'to lay siege against the town, and to suppress all that shall come to oppose them'.

If Goring thought that there would be some delay before the island was cut off from the outside world he was speedily disillusioned. During the early days of August a sizeable military force seems to have been building up in the nearby mainland villages and on the slopes of Portsdown Hill, so that it became daily more difficult for the king's supporters to send in supplies. 'The gentry and commonalty of Hampshire . . .', we are told, 'thought it most convenient to make a timely prevention . . . to which end they drew up such forces as the country could afford . . . so that no forces can either march in or out.' There is no doubt that this local initiative had important practical results. Goring and his officers afterwards admitted that many avowed Royalists had failed to reach the fortress 'by reason of the gathering together of the country forces, and the approaching of others from London'. Throughout the region a careful watch was kept for men and equipment travelling towards the coast. On or about 10 August, for example, a certain Mr Knowles and a Dorset man named White were stopped, and on another occasion two fine horses belonging to Mr Waldegrave, a known Roman Catholic, were seized. At



Map of Portsmouth Haven, Portsea Island, Hayling Island, and adjoining country drawn by La Favelure. Add 16,371 a. in the British Museum. (Date about 1600)

Reproduced by Henry Lewis, 114, High Street, Portsmouth -1890- from a copy in the possession of R.East. Esq.

Salisbury, William Wroughton, apparently a junior officer from Portsmouth, was thrown into the gaol, and one of the aldermen went to Downton to turn back thirty Wiltshire recruits believed to be awaiting him there. Some had in fact already gone home, but others with more spirit had slipped away to Portsmouth where, a day or two later, they were intercepted by the vigilant Parliamentary watch.

The growing assault force of trained-bands from Hampshire, Sussex and Surrey was joined on 10 August by two troops of horse. One was commanded by Colonel Hurry, and the other, consisting of forty-three men, by Sir William Waller, who now apparently took command of the besieging army. Not all was well, however, in the Parliamentary camp. A letter sent to Speaker Lenthall by the Hampshire Committee reveals that ammunition, twice promised, had not been received, and there was a shortage of horses and a slackening off in the supply of foot soldiers because of the opposition of some of the local gentry. A strong plea was made for money to pay those who had already arrived, because £1,000 which had been sent down earlier was soon likely to be exhausted. A postscript added a request for 400 muskets, bandoleers, rests and swords out of the Parliamentary stores. Since strong reinforcements for Goring were expected daily from the Marquis of Hertford and the Earl of Southampton, the Committee urged that the remainder of Waller's men and a regiment of foot under experienced officers should be sent down to Hampshire as soon as possible. According to one source, Sir John Merrick's regiment arrived in the area about this time, perhaps in response to the Committee's demand.

Among the troopers under Waller's command was a Scottish contingent which soon gained a reputation for courage and an appetite for action. Some of these men were billeted at Havant at the house of the Rector, Francis Ringstead, a staunch Royalist. This 'most pestilent man' had, at the first sign of trouble, sent a light-horse to fight for the king, and the Scots, it was said, 'are with him therefore'. As a reprisal, too, for his action and opinions, he was required to pay for ten light-horse to serve Parliament. This unfortunate man seems to have had a most unpleasant time trying to cope with the wild northerners, one of whom, 'being aggrieved with him', is said to have 'basted him well favouredly'. When his attempts to escape were frustrated he seems to have come to terms with the situation. He 'waits upon them daily', it was reported, 'gives them good words, and tells them that he will gladly lie out of his own bed to make them room'.

Although in mid-August a news-letter reported that 'about 240 horses, troopers, and 500 foot' had mustered for the final assault on the town, there is surprisingly little information about the exact composition of the Parliamentary force. Not much more is known about the Portsmouth garrison. If a statement made by the Royalist officers after the siege is to be believed, at the time of Goring's declaration there were 'of the ordinary garrison about 300 persons, and of the townsmen

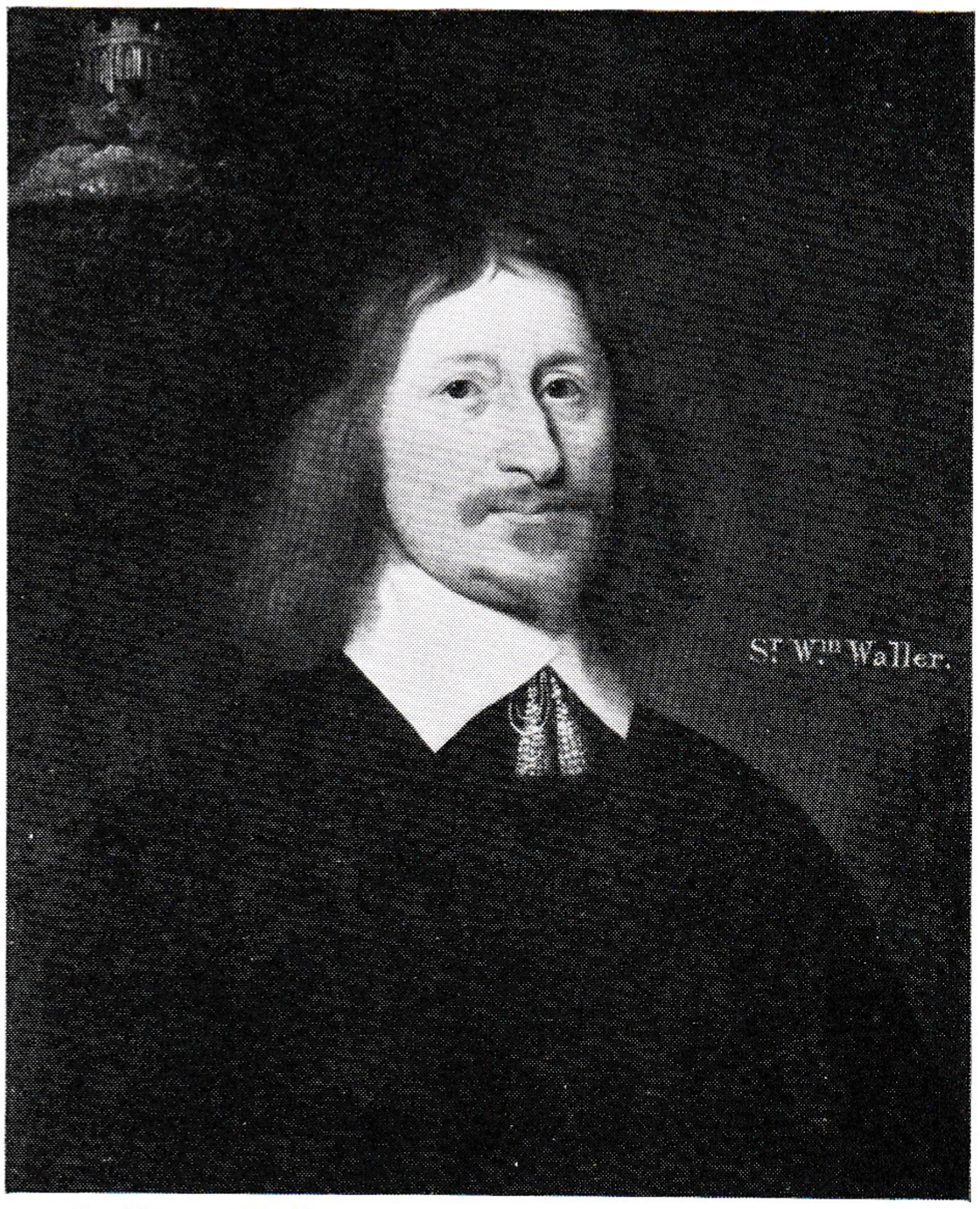
Portsea Island and neighbouring areas c. 1600, from a map by La Favelure.

(Photocopied by the Portsmouth City Engineer's Department and reproduced by courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum.)

about one hundred that were able to bear arms, and of the island which was also under the command of the Governor about 100 fighting men more. Of officers with their servants there were then about 50. With their and the Governor's horses there was above 50 horse.' Another report says simply that at the time of Goring's speech those capable of bearing arms 'were about the number of three hundred'. Clarendon, in typical vein, stresses the paucity of the Governor's support among the gentry and men of his own rank. Except for Lord Wentworth and Thomas Weston, the Earl of Portland's brother, 'who came to enjoy the delight of his company, which was very attractive, and for whom he had promised to raise troops of horse', only three or four country gentlemen, 'with so small a number of men as was fitter for their equipage and retinue than for the defence of the place', were said to have joined him, together with an extra twenty or thirty men of humble birth recruited by sympathisers and added to the regular garrison.

Some military support seems to have come from Chichester, which politically was a divided city. At an early stage, Christopher Lewknor, the Recorder and Member of Parliament, wrote to Goring to sound out his views, and after receiving a satisfactory answer he and others joined the garrison. The men that they brought with them soon gained a reputation for ruthlessness. 'Since Chichester men came to Portsmouth', a news-letter tells us in mid-August, 'there hath been harder usage of people by the colonel and his company than before, and some think by their or some of their advices'.

No official lists of the fighting men now remain from the time of the siege, but some of the garrison accounts for the financial year ending 29 September 1640 are still available, and from these can be obtained a complete picture of Goring's peacetime force. During the last quarter of this period, for example, there were 135 men on the strength, a much lower figure than that given in the officers' description of the situation in early August 1642, by which time presumably the garrison had been built up in anticipation of the outbreak of hostilities. In 1640, receiving a daily wage of 8d. each, were a hundred soldiers, some of whom had specialist duties allotted to them. John Bigges was storekeeper and Thomas Beard the porter. The post of clerk of the garrison was held by John Lee, and that of clerk of the reports by John Webb. Receiving the same rate of pay as the soldiers but classed as officers were John Hunt (ensign), Henry Jenman (drum), Thomas Yong (fife), Thomas Whitehorne (armourer) and Anthony Stevens (chirurgeon). John



Sir William Waller. From a painting attributed to Edward Bower in the National Portrait Gallery.

Lobb, the master-gunner, earned a daily fee of 10d., and was assisted by a force of twenty-nine gunners, fifteen of whom were each paid 8d. and the rest 6d. The total wage-bill of the garrison during the quarter was nearly £426.

It was an age, however, when the pay of members of the armed forces was frequently in arrears, and in August 1641 it was stated that those serving in the Portsmouth garrison had not been paid for two-and-a-half years. In the following January the situation had apparently not improved, because a petition from the men was discussed in the Commons. Attempts were made to find the reasons for the delay and to earmark a source from which money might be forthcoming. In March it was resolved that £5,030 should be distributed to the garrison to cover a year's pay and some of the arrears, but warrants were not issued until July. Although early in August it was reported that the Governor 'had gotten a great sum of money from the county to pay his men', it is very likely that these financial arrangements were overtaken by events,

(Photograph by Portsmouth City Museums.)

An engraving of 1765 showing Southsea Castle (left), the fortified town of Portsmouth, and the harbour entrance.

and that Goring did not receive all that was due to him before the siege began, even though the cancellation of the order did not occur until 24 August.

Nevertheless there is ample evidence that large sums of money had been sent to Goring by both sides during the last months of the peace, and it is difficult to believe that the financial needs of the men could not have been met earlier. In his speech of 2 August he admitted to the soldiers that 'Parliament hath made some promise to see you satisfied', but put pressure on them by making it clear that only those who stayed would benefit from the substantial sum of money which he said that he had received from the king. For the majority of the men who listened to him there could have been no real choice. Another large sum of money is said to have arrived in Portsmouth about 9 August. According to information given to Parliament by a London hackney-coachman, some gentlemen had contacted him 'and hired his coach and six horses, agreeing with him by the day, not telling of him whither he should go'. Three other coaches, each with six horses, had been hired at the same time. Two had been sent off along one route and the third along another. Each vehicle had carried two gentlemen. The informant went on to say that one of the two passengers in his own coach had been Mr Weston, the Earl of Portland's brother. At Portsmouth, which had been their destination, the coachman 'understood that these gentlemen carried down along with them nine thousand pounds in silver, but before he came thither he knew nothing thereof. But he said that one Welch, another of these coachmen, told him after he came to Portsmouth that he knew of it, and did help to tell the money in London.' It is difficult to believe that as late as about 9 August large coaches pulled by teams of horses could rumble down the Portsmouth road and, without arousing the suspicion of the hawk-eyed Parliamentary watch, cross Portsbridge, the only point of entry by land to the island.

Although he had been the master of events, Goring's preparations for a siege proved to be totally inadequate. 'Of victual there was not by estimation sufficient . . . above two days', we are told, and with the arrival of a naval squadron off the coast about 8 August there was little hope of securing further supplies by sea. The poor condition of the defences, even after Goring's repair work, was the subject of comment by observers. Much still remained to be done in the early days of August. He 'had relied too much upon probable and casual assistance', wrote Clarendon, 'and neglected to do that himself [which] a vigilant officer would have done'. Instead of devoting money to garrison purposes, he

recorded angrily, he had squandered it on 'good fellowship, or lost it at play, the temptation of either of which vices he never could resist'.

During the early days of August the *Henrietta Maria* pinnace rode in the harbour under the walls of Portsmouth. It was the only naval vessel Goring had and was greatly outclassed by the growing force of ships which his adversaries were able to bring up to seal off the island by sea. Nevertheless in an emergency her six guns were capable of inflicting serious damage on the enemy. On the night of 9 (or 10) August the Parliamentary sea-captains allowed Brown Bushell, an officer on Captain Martin's ship, to attempt a bold stroke. Under cover of darkness he took one or more long-boats through the heavily-defended harbour waters and captured the vessel. During the whole operation not a gun was fired or a blow struck. According to one account, the *Henrietta Maria* had forty soldiers on board, 'all which they took, put . . . under decks, and brought away . . .' A Royalist version of the incident attributed the loss to the treachery of the master, and mentioned a crew of only twelve seamen and two officers. The prize was speedily taken across the harbour to a place near Fareham, where her rigging and guns were removed. It was a dazzling feat and a serious blow to Goring's pride and prestige. The gratitude of the Commons was immediately conveyed to the captains and, more particularly, to the daring Brown Bushell, an able and indefatigable officer who, during the next few years, changed sides on several occasions and finally ended his career on the scaffold.

Meanwhile the land forces of Parliament were willing to bide their time. Writing from Southwick on 12 August, the Hampshire Committee informed the Speaker that it was considered 'scarce proper' to summon Goring officially to give up the town 'till we have forces fit for the assault thereof should he refuse us', and pointed out that 'he could not but hang that trumpeter that should come to require his soldiers not to yield him any further obedience, with those other commands that you have directed for the Mayor and townsmen, which hath made us respite to proceed thereon'.

Goring's supporters, however, thirsted for action, and several incidents which apparently occurred on the slopes of Portsdown Hill during this phase of the operations are vividly described in a letter which a Hampshire gentleman wrote to a friend in London in mid-August. On one occasion, he reported, a force of six Parliamentary horsemen put to flight a much stronger party of Cavaliers, one of whom was killed, another wounded, and a third taken prisoner. About this time, too, a serious clash was triggered off by a minor incident which occurred at Havant when a Royalist and his servant rode into the little market town and tried to incite the inhabitants to loot the Southwick home of Colonel Norton, one of the leading Parliamentarians in the area. He, upon being informed, had the trouble-makers arrested and sent to London. In retaliation, a Cavalier force made a sortie towards Southwick, where they 'challenged Mr Norton forth, saying "Where is this same Norton? Where is he? I warrant him he is a very coward, let him come forth if he dare." ' The colonel, buff-coated and suitably armed, immediately rode out with his men and was fortunate enough to be joined by a hundred mounted soldiers who had just arrived in the area. Against such a formidable body the spirits of the Cavaliers flagged, and 'they posted down the hill towards their fort with great speed'. The writer added that 'the Scots that were among Mr Norton's auxiliaries would presently have flown on upon the fort, but Mr Norton would not suffer them for fear of danger, there being ordnance planted there'.

This defence-work had been built at Portsbridge a little earlier. Across the road stretched a strong wooden barricade and on the south side of the creek was 'a little fort or bulwark of earth' which, until about 10 August, carried four guns and was supported by a small force of a dozen or more horsemen. As the Parliamentary troops began to arrive, however, Goring had second thoughts about the military importance of this advanced position. Perhaps expecting his foes to land men on one of the island's harbour shores, he ordered the speedy removal of the Portsbridge ordnance to within the walls of Portsmouth. The defence of the bridge was left to a few men armed with pistols and carbines whose task was clearly to keep Waller's soldiers occupied while the Royalists, in anticipation of a total withdrawal to the safety of the town, scoured the island for additional supplies.

The contemporary writers who describe the events of the next two days were supporters of Parliament and probably prone to exaggeration, but there is little doubt that the large-scale requisitioning of foodstuffs caused the inhabitants serious distress. From the 'fruitful isle of Portsea' hundreds of cattle, sheep and pigs were driven into Portsmouth, 'whether they were fat or lean, to be all killed and salted up', Goring forcing their luckless owners to act as drovers. One writer tells how some of the unslaughtered animals were left to graze 'upon some ground below the mounts that round the town, but the most of them they put out without the town gate into a marsh near the town

in the island, and there kept them with some musketeers'. The soldiers were also reported to have stripped bare the farms and cottages of 'corn, meal, flour, beef, bacon, bread, butter, cheese, eggs, and all their poultry and ducks, not leaving half loaves of bread, nor pieces of bread, nor pieces of cheese . . . to the great terror of all the people, especially women and children, forcing poor and rich to come away and beg about for bread to keep them alive . . .'

The 'most mean' country folk, too weak to protect themselves, were rescued from worse misfortunes by the seamen of the blockading squadron. Put ashore on the eastern side of the island and protected against Goring's soldiers by the two guns which they had brought with them, they ferried many of the women and children to safety on Hayling Island. According to one estimate, about a hundred cattle and two hundred sheep were taken with them across Langstone Harbour, some joined by ropes to the boats, after which they were forced to swim.

Meanwhile, at their headquarters at Southwick, the Parliamentary officers were making preparations for an attack on Portsbridge. During the afternoon of Friday, 12 August, their plans were thwarted by a heavy downpour of rain and the assault force remained under cover. That evening, however (one observer put it at about six o'clock), conditions had so improved that twenty troopers under the command of Sir William Waller and Colonel Hurry were able to break down the stout timber barricade – although only after some difficulty – and so take the bridge. Goring's tiny force, said to number only eight men, hastily withdrew with their enemies in pursuit. One of the Royalists was taken prisoner and another lost his mount but 'saved himself by his leaping from his horse and going over hedges into the cornfields, who had his hat cut and his head a little rased with a sword, but not much hurt'. So, swiftly and with little opposition, only a day or two after the *Henrietta Maria* incident, the first round of the military contest was won by the forces of Parliament. 'I must tell you the taking of this bridge is of greater moment than most think . . .' wrote one observer, 'for it possesses them of the island Portsea, which hath 2000 acres of corn now standing upon it.' The success greatly encouraged Waller's troops. 'This hath put much mettle into the soldiers', it was reported, 'and it would make a faint-hearted man a soldier to see their spirits and resolution.'

Before tackling the new and much more formidable challenge presented by the walls of Portsmouth, within which Goring and his garrison were now penned, Waller set about strengthening the Portsbridge defences. Hundreds of men were soon at work constructing two mounts upon which were set up the guns which had been removed from the *Henrietta Maria* pinnace. One writer speaks of six pieces, 'three of them towards the town and three of them towards Portsdown'. If Waller's men had been more adventurous they might have added to their store of ordnance one of the guns which Goring had withdrawn from Portsbridge a few days earlier. Three had been successfully brought back to the town, but the fourth, which had suffered a damaged carriage, had been left in the highway about half a mile from the gate, guarded by two gunners, one of whom had subsequently been killed by a Parliamentary trooper who had managed to come up behind them. Despite the obvious value of the weapon to the Parliamentarians, Lord Wentworth seems to have met no opposition when he recovered it with sixty men on 13 August.

It was probably soon after this incident that a series of skirmishes took place near the town walls. On several occasions the besieging force attempted to seize the cattle grazing outside the Landport Gate, and on another an attack was made on the watermill which stood close by on an arm of the sea, but the plan to fire the building and so prevent the grinding of the garrison corn was apparently foiled. In all these attacks, despite 'much playing of the ordnance', casualties were very small, and a hat and a sword the only trophies secured by the defenders. An eye-witness tells how, when one Royalist sally was beaten back, the pursuers included a brave member of Waller's Scottish contingent who 'followed the chase unto the very town', where six of the garrison attacked him. He defended himself bravely, 'but they gave him three gashes in the head, and for all that he was retreating and like to get away from them all had not one very suddenly shut the gate against him'. So, despite his valiant efforts, he was taken, but the Royalists admired his courage 'and procured the best chirurgeon they could to cure him, and let him want nothing for his conveniency'. In addition, Goring gave him some money as a reward when, two days later, he was exchanged for a Royalist prisoner at the first of several parleys which were arranged during the next few weeks. At the arrival of Waller's trumpeter, the Royalist sentries, 'being so ignorant that they knew not the sound of a parley from an alarum, let fly a piece of ordnance at him, but it hurt him not'. Despite this hostile reception he managed to convey his message, 'so the trumpeter brought in the prisoner behind him, and he took away with him behind him the said Scotchman, who being blindfolded was carried out to him to a place called Newgate, and

there set up behind the said trumpeter'.

The last Royalist sortie of which we have record was the most ambitious and, with declining morale within the garrison, probably the most desperate. Two companies, commanded by Goring and Lord Wentworth and guided by a burgess named Winter, 'whom they call Lieutenant of Southsea Castle', went out by night to the enemy camp some distance inland. In the ensuing fight Goring and his friend Weston each lost a man, and Winter, who was riding a valuable horse belonging to Lord Wentworth, was taken prisoner. It was not an effective action, but it shows that Clarendon was unfair to Goring when he wrote that he 'suffered the enemy to approach as he pleased without disturbing him by any brisk sally or soldierly action'. Five musketeers who had been Parliamentary sentinels were captured and set to work carrying baskets of earth to strengthen the Portsmouth defences, but a trooper with an arm wound who was also brought in stubbornly refused to comply with the Governor's orders. Winter's son was later allowed to take clean linen to his father at Waller's farmhouse headquarters, and brought back word that the king was generally believed to be near Romsey and would soon be on the island to reward those who had supported him.

It was a wild rumour, like the story of a French supporting force which had circulated earlier, but although it was allowed to spread through the town in an attempt to whip up enthusiasm for the Royalist cause, its effect was negligible. Even when, some days later, one of Lord Wentworth's men arrived disguised in old clothes, 'as if he had been some country shepherd', and told how he had 'had entertainment on the Parliament side', few believed his news that King Charles was on his way from Oxford with a relief force. 'We continually led on and encouraged the soldiers with the expectation of the king's coming, or forces from His Majesty,' reported the Royalist leaders afterwards, 'but at length they finding themselves delayed grew impatient and so bold that they declared they would not fight against, but rather take part with, those without the town.' As a result, 'we were forced not only to keep watch over those that were without but those that were within the town'.

If by mid-August morale was low and the number of defenders steadily decreasing it was not surprising. Many of the men had been pressed into service unwillingly and had no stomach for fighting over matters which they did not properly understand. The London hackney-coachman who had told of the transport of silver to Portsmouth early in the siege had added that he and his fellow drivers 'did very hardly get away from the Cavaliers, being very desirous to detain both them and their horses, and that they proffered to make them officers . . .' Others had been less fortunate. A country farmer had been recruited against his will after coming into the town to sell his butter. Such men were not 'hot in the service', and if one report is true by 12 August half the soldiers and townsmen had already departed. Another described how 'the greatest part of the garrison soldiers were gone away by night, sometimes four, sometimes six, and more or less for a great many nights together. And the most of the best gunners were gone from them, and all gone to the Parliament side'. A member of the Commons told how 'every night some of the Portsmouth soldiers and gunners get away down the walls and come to the troopers, utterly disliking the colonel's cause and usage of the inhabitants of Portsea Island'. Even some of the more influential members of the Chichester contingent were said to wish they were in their own city again, and one of them, hoping to make his escape, was 'at charges 5 shillings a day only for a boat which lieth at hand . . . but cannot yet get away'. No doubt some of these reports and the frequently-repeated stories of the licentiousness of the soldiery were propaganda exercises which tended to exaggerate the true state of affairs, but it is clear that in spite of his natural charm and previous experience as a military commander Goring completely failed to keep the allegiance of more than a fraction of his men once the reality of the siege became apparent.

Not surprisingly the siege produced a crop of stories about attempts to smuggle messages in and out of the town. At Havant a traveller's boots were found to contain letters despatched to the garrison from the North, and Colonel Norton sent both the packet and the bearer to Westminster for further investigation. At Havant, too, on 13 August, a horseman was intercepted carrying to a Portsmouth Royalist a suit of clothes in the lining of which ten letters had been sewn. On another occasion a messenger who had taken to the by-ways to avoid suspicion 'met him a man (conceive the simplest . . . that ever you saw and you have his image), who demanded of him whither he was going'. Not sensing any danger he told him, 'but that simple unlikely man laid hold of his bundle, bade him to stay, told him that he was an officer', and had him taken to Norton's house at Southwick. But probably the best-known story was about a woman who crossed Portsbridge nursing a bundle which she told one of the soldiers on guard was her baby. Closer inspection revealed that it was in fact a puppet of rags in the head of which was a black box full of correspondence.

Portsmouth Cathedral. At the east end is part of the medieval parish church of St. Thomas of Canterbury, the tower of which, at the time of the siege, stood between the transepts. The present tower was completed in 1691.

(Photograph by courtesy of Portsmouth and Sunderland Newspapers Ltd.)

Although some messengers did manage to pass through the Parliamentary lines, it is very unlikely that Royalist supporters were able to smuggle supplies into the town. During the early days of the siege a consignment of 135 quarters of wheat *en route* from Fareham was seized by Master Allyn and the Gosport watch, much to the annoyance of Goring who, until he was dissuaded 'for the women and children's sake', threatened to bombard the little town as a retaliatory measure. Another 80 quarters were on two ships which came into the possession of the blockading fleet a few hours after the capture of the *Henrietta Maria*. Some of the corn was left in the hands of the mariners as a reward, some was kept for the use of the besieging forces, and a small amount was distributed to poor folks in the coastal villages to encourage them to report news of any similar attempts to supply the garrison. Off the Isle of Wight the *Lion* of Leith, the colourful owner-commander of which was Captain Lovis (or Louis) Dick, who was rumoured to be a Scottish nobleman, successfully intercepted two Portsmouth-bound barks carrying salt, in one of which the seamen found a chest of money. On another occasion the *Lion* seized a small ship with a cargo of military saddles and harness intended, so it was said, for the use of Isle of Wight Royalists. When Captain Dick learned that the boatman had been promised nine shillings freight money, he paid the sum out of his own pocket and jocularly 'bade him withall to bring the horses' too.

In addition to the free-lance *Lion*, Warwick's fleet by mid-August consisted of the *Paragon*, the *Charles*, the *Caesar*, the *Black James*, and two other vessels. Writing to his cousin at this time, someone on the *Paragon*, then in Stokes Bay, reported, 'Our greatest harmony is the thundering of cannon both day and night.' He was probably referring to the sound of the land batteries, not naval gunfire, because it was later stated that during the whole operation the fleet 'did not spend a shot upon the town'. But the ships were not merely sea-sentinels nor their companies passive observers of events after the *Henrietta Maria* incident and the Langstone Harbour ferrying operations. During the second half of August, Captain Richard Swanley of the *Charles*, who seems in the absence of Warwick to have been the senior officer in the fleet, initiated successful operations against the Isle of Wight and managed to wrest Carisbrooke Castle and the principal forts from the hands of supporters of Goring and put them under the command of trusted Parliamentary officers. In this work Captain Dick was particularly active. The good news of continued progress on both land and sea was heard at Westminster with great relief. 'The Parliament at the Lord Admiral's request hath given all seamen a month's pay extraordinary', it was reported on 18 August, and a Commons Journal entry for the same day tells us that the Committee for the Navy was ordered to send to each of the ships at Portsmouth a tun of wine in recognition of their good service. At the end of the month Captain Swanley, his fellow captains, and their men were again complimented and promised further reward.

While the key points in the Isle of Wight were being secured, preparations were going on quietly for the next stage in the reduction of Portsmouth. By now Waller probably had the benefit of advice from Sir John Meldrum, a veteran warrior who had been knighted in 1620 for his services in the Netherlands. About 18 August 'much digging with pickaxes and driving of carts' could be seen across the harbour at Gosport by the Portsmouth defenders, 'whereby they sensibly perceived that they were framing some works to make a fort, whereat they were much troubled'. At once Goring ordered his gunners to eliminate this

potential threat by bombarding the site with shot from the formidable battery mounted on the sea walls; but in spite of this distraction the Gosport men continued to carry out their orders, and by the end of a fortnight they had built two gun-platforms, one for ten pieces of ordnance behind a barn, and the other for two behind a pile of faggots. Apparently the only casualty was a ship's carpenter named John (or Peter) Baker, whose death was recorded in the church register of St. Mary's at Alverstoke on 24 August. He is said to have foolishly 'stood upon the work with a candle and lantern in his hand, whereby they took a true aim and shot him'. But it was also rumoured that he had been killed accidentally by one of the sentries on his own side.

During this period a last effort was made by Parliament to come to terms with Goring. On 27 August a trumpeter was sent to the town to sound a parley, and on the following day, at ten o'clock, Sir William Waller and Sir William Lewis came into Portsmouth and dined with Goring while Lord Wentworth and Christopher Lewknor were entertained at the Parliamentary headquarters by Sir Thomas Jervoise and others. But it was to no avail. Goring would not accept the terms offered to him and the bombardment of the Gosport emplacements was resumed. So low was the standard of his men's gunnery, however, that only the roofs of some houses were damaged. The new platforms and the Parliamentary camp on Portsea Island, which also came under fire at this time, both remained intact.

Until early September Portsmouth itself had apparently been subjected to little heavy enemy fire, but with the construction of the Gosport platforms and the mounting of ordnance, some of which the fleet provided, there was an important change in the military situation. On Friday, 2 September, the day began agreeably with the arrival of one of Waller's trumpeters who, having been allowed into the town, presented Goring with a brace of bucks, 'which venison had been by the Committee of the Parliament promised unto the Governor'. But a few hours later, about four o'clock in the afternoon, social niceties were forgotten when two of the Gosport guns began to lob shot across the harbour mouth. It reached as far as the Town Mount, near the Landport Gate, where a soldier carrying earth was killed and a Frenchman lost a leg. The accurate shooting of the Parliamentary gunners terrified the defenders, and that night, during a lull in the bombardment, all the men who could be spared from other duties were set to work digging a trench on the Mount, into which, 'upon the sight of the firing of the ordnance they might leap down . . . and save themselves'. On Saturday the Gosport gunners opened up again, and on this occasion the target was apparently the church tower, which was being used by the defenders as a lookout, 'whereby they do espy all the approaches by sea and by land, and at the tolling of a bell give notice both what ships come by sea and what number of horses come by land'. The skilful Gosport gunners 'shot through the tower of the church and brake one of the bells, and shot against the tower again, and that rebounded and fell into the church and shot down another top of a house that is near the church, and the end of the church, and shot through a great many houses in the town, but killed not anybody'. The tower and nave of the old medieval parish church lay in ruins and remained unbuilt until after the Restoration. Also under fire that same Saturday was the town mill. A direct hit was scored on the recently-vacated bed of the miller, who ever afterwards 'commended it for a good thing to rise betimes in the morning'.

For more than twenty-four hours Portsmouth had been subjected to the accurate shooting of the Gosport gunners, and it soon became clear that this bombardment was designed not only to inflict the maximum amount of damage on key buildings in the town but also to distract the defenders while final preparations were being made for an assault on Southsea Castle, which was an essential part of the harbour defences. Situated on the southernmost point of the island about a mile from the town in a semi-wilderness of salt marsh, and commanding the shipping channel into the harbour, it had been erected about 1544 as one of the links in a formidable chain of anti-invasion defences. Its 'device and fashion', so Henry VIII had been told, was 'strange and marvellously praised of all men that have seen it'. In 1626 and 1640 the castle had been seriously damaged by fire, but in spite of the financial difficulties of the administration some rebuilding had apparently taken place in the years immediately preceding the outbreak of hostilities. In a letter written in early September 1642 by 'a clerk in the leaguer', there is an interesting description of this compact but impressive building, 'which kept the ships from coming to aid us, the strength of which is admirable, and I believe all men that have been in it will say it is the strongest castle in England for the bigness'. Such language probably exaggerated the state of the fort, which the writer had just seen taken by his stout-hearted comrades, but there is no doubt that if it had been properly equipped and manned, and intelligently defended, it could have presented Waller with a serious obstacle. The square stone keep domi-

nated an *enceinte* of sharp-angled walls which on the east and west sides embraced rectangular earth-filled gun-emplacements. 'It is walled about with a wall of three or four yards thick, about thirty foot high, a graft [i.e. moat] round about of some three or four yards deep and five yards in breadth', wrote the same clerk. 'It hath 14 pieces of ordnance planted round, all but two pieces shot 12 pound bullets, besides other small pieces; it hath dainty chambers in it, fit to entertain a prince; it was new repaired lately.'

The castle garrison normally consisted of two porters, one of whom was paid 8d. a day and the other 6d., a master gunner (8d.), fourteen gunners and eleven soldiers (6d. each). At the time of the siege the commanding officer was Captain Challoner (or Challender), who was one of the wealthiest residents of the island. He was entitled to 2s. a day for his official duties, and was assisted by a Lieutenant – no longer the unfortunate Alderman Winter, who had been captured – who received 1s. 1d. By early September only a dozen men remained for the castle's defence, Goring being unable or unwilling to provide reinforcements from his own shrinking resources, although an attack was known to be imminent. However, many of the town guns were trained on the castle entrance and the exposed track which led to it across the common, and most of Challoner's own weapons were mounted to resist an attack from the landward side. No doubt the serious military situation was discussed at length on Saturday, 3 September, when the Captain went into Portsmouth to confer with his friend, the Governor. Afterwards, despite the bombardment of the town by the Gosport gunners and his own state of inebriation, he was able to return to the castle, taking with him fresh supplies of biscuit, meal, and other necessities.

Later that same night, after protracted discussions at Waller's headquarters, a Parliamentary force, '2 troops and a matter of four hundred foot', set out with scaling ladders for the assault. With them went 'a very good engineer' whom observers did not name. To strengthen their resolve as they marched, the soldiers sang psalms, the booming Gosport guns providing a consoling accompaniment. Although a feint attack was made on the far side of the town to keep Goring's men occupied, the Southsea Castle assault force was not allowed to cross the open common between the two morasses without some harassment. But the Portsmouth gunners could not stop the progress of the Parliamentary troops and in the early hours of Sunday morning they 'came within two bowshot' of the building 'and there lay an hour'. Later they 'took away on the left hand, and the enemy expected them on the right, so we were not descried all this while'. Eventually they were seen, 'but we were got on the seashore before they could make shot upon us . . . and came between the sea and the castle, and leaped into the graft, where some of our men hurt themselves'. On these walls, we are told, 'were no ordnance, for they had removed them on the other side toward the heath'. Meanwhile some Parliamentary soldiers led by the intrepid Brown Bushell, who seems to have taken a prominent part in the affair, were on the bridge across the dry moat at the main entrance to the castle, and a trumpeter was ordered to sound a parley. Challoner, who had been brought from his bed, had some talk with the attackers. 'We propounded fair quarter in case he would fairly surrender the castle', wrote an eye-witness later. 'If not we would use our discretion in our proceedings against him. He being something in drink and withall newly wakened out of his deep sleep desired first of all that we should stay till the next morning and he would consider of it.' Nevertheless he asked Bushell who had sent him, and the latter replied 'that he had received his message from Colonel Waller, Colonel Norton, and Colonel Hurry, who were then not far off and waited for the resignation of that fort'. The exact sequence of events during the operation is not clear, but it was probably during this parley that Goring, having become acutely aware of the dangerous situation, began to fire off his guns furiously at the bridge. Captain Bushell narrowly missed injury and ten men who saw shot flying in their direction escaped only by flinging themselves to the ground, although the large log behind which they sheltered was hit. Lest Challoner should try to gain an advantage by procrastination, the foot soldiers were ordered to scale the walls. They met no opposition. An eye-witness reported later, 'Challoner seeing himself nigh lost demanded presently fair quarter, which he obtained with all his soldiers, though few in number, beside his lieutenant and ensign'. Sergeant-Major Harbert and Captain Bushell ordered the disarming of the prisoners, who were confined to their quarters, and a substantial garrison was placed in the castle to prevent its recapture. As for Challoner, 'he fell to drinking of the King and Parliament's health in sack with our officers, desiring that 3 pieces of ordnance might be discharged against the town of Portsmouth to let them know that now this castle was at another man's disposing; those being discharged, the town let so fly at us that I thought we should have been all cut off'.

It had been a good night's work for Waller's men, and with this seemingly effortless success the morale

(Photograph by courtesy of
Portsmouth and Sunderland Newspapers Ltd.)

of Goring's rapidly-diminishing force declined almost to vanishing point. The Mayor, a lieutenant, an ensign, and other officers escaped over the wall, leaving behind a garrison so small and weak that Goring, scanning the Gosport gun-platforms through his 'prospective glass', realised that although supplies of gunpowder, ammunition, and most foodstuffs except provender for the horses were still fairly plentiful, militarily little more could be done. His entreaties to his men to hold out a day or two longer fell on deaf ears. All but a few 'desperate hellhounds' were openly rebellious and threw down their arms, 'being possessed with fear of having the town battered down on all sides, and being frighted more by their wives'. According to Goring's remaining officers, the number of men still willing to fight was 'not above . . . three score at most, and those [were] gentlemen and their servants which were not used either to traversing of great guns or use of muskets'.

Early on Sunday morning Goring held a Council of War at which it was unanimously decided to send a drummer to arrange another parley. In due course Lord Wentworth, Christopher Lewknor, and Mr Weston went out to Kingston as hostages while the Parliamentary representatives, Sir William Waller, Sir Thomas Jervoise, and Sir William Lewis, came into the town to discuss terms. It is not clear from existing records whether the Governor of Portsmouth at this period used as his official residence the rambling building which served that purpose after the Restoration and which, except for the medieval section now known as the Garrison Church, was demolished early in the nineteenth century. If he did, it was almost certainly in one of the rooms of this building, which had once been the Domus Dei of Portsmouth, and where, twenty years later, Charles II married Catherine of Braganza, that the articles of surrender (see Appendix) were discussed.

The terms were generous. The Civil War was as yet little more than an extension of the regular sporting activities of the country gentry, and the military operations had been conducted with caution, so that the total number of casualties was very small. During the negotiations the Royalist officers apparently used as a strong bargaining counter the large supplies of gunpowder which were still in their possession. In one magazine were stored two hundred barrels, while in the main repository, the Square Tower, were another twelve hundred, as well as a good stock of ammunition. 'If they had set them on fire', wrote a Parlia-

The Square Tower (built 1494) and adjoining fortifications.

mentarian, 'the whole town had been utterly spoiled, and not one person in the town could have been secured from destruction.'

On Wednesday, 7 September, the siege was officially at an end. The articles of surrender were sealed and the Parliamentary officers took possession. During that day the Royalist gentlemen and their followers left the town in accordance with the promise that all who had fought for the king, with the exception of those who had deserted to join the garrison, would have their safety guaranteed. As they rode out through the gates with their swords and pistols and personal possessions, they hid their humiliation in spirited cries that they meant to be back as victors before Christmas. 'And in the evening at six of the clock', one observer tells us, 'Colonel Goring took boat and rowed unto ship for Holland, but it is said he would go through France, and that his goods were carried to shipboard on Wednesday and Thursday.'[1]

There is a story that as he left the harbour Goring defiantly threw the key of the Square Tower magazine – or, according to another version, of the town – into the water, where it remained until its accidental discovery some time during the nineteenth century. Whether the key now in Southsea Castle Museum is authentic, or even whether the Governor's theatrical gesture has. any real historical basis, cannot now be established. Such an act, however, would not have been out of character. During the siege the unreliable and self-willed young courtier had done little more than play at soldiers, as if for his own amusement, seeming rarely to take seriously his great responsibilities. He had misjudged the true extent of the king's local support, failed to put the town in an adequate state of readiness, and underestimated the cool determination of his adversaries. Perhaps because he lacked patience and perseverance, two of the essential qualities needed by a good garrison commander at a time of crisis, and found at Portsmouth little scope for the kind of swift, heroic action he craved, the siege proved to be an uncongenial military exercise with which he was soon bored. And since circumstances had deprived him of the chance to play host to Queen Henrietta Maria and her ladies, he thought the town 'too low a sphere for him to move in . . . And so', wrote the perceptive Clarendon, 'he cared not to lose what he did not care to keep.'

Thus, only a few weeks after his impetuous call to arms, the swaggering colonel had been driven out of his stronghold and his place as Governor taken by Sir William Lewis, a Parliamentarian. The news of these inglorious and unprofitable events 'almost struck the king to the heart', yet so strong was Goring's influence that a few months later, when he returned from Holland, he was once again given high command. During the next three years, except for a period when he was a prisoner of Parliament, he was one of the king's principal military leaders, but he was an intractable subordinate and an unreliable colleague, and his erratic behaviour did considerable damage to the Royalist cause. Early in 1645 he returned with a large force to Hampshire, where Portsmouth had remained loyal to Parliament; but if he saw the town again it was from the crest of Portsdown Hill or from across the harbour at Gosport, where his men set fire to the houses of the terrified inhabitants.

It was one of his last campaigns in England. Towards the end of the year, on grounds of ill-health, he left abruptly for the continent, and in time became colonel-general of the English regiments in Spanish service in the Netherlands. In 1650 he went to Spain to collect his arrears of pay and seek assistance for King Charles II. There, seven years later, this talented but undisciplined man died in comparative obscurity and poverty, dressed in his last days, so it was said, in the plain black habit of a Dominican friar.

[1] John Evelyn, the diarist, then only twenty-one years of age, visited the town at the time of the surrender. He wrote: 'October 3rd [*sic*] to Chichester, and thence the next day to see the siege of Portsmouth . . . It was on the day of its being rendered to Sir William Waller, which [gave] me opportunity of taking my leave of Col. Goring the Governor now embarking for France.' *The Diary of John Evelyn*, ed. E. S. de Beer (London, 1959), p. 45. The spelling in the extract has been modernized.

APPENDIX

ARTICLES agreed upon between the Committee for the Parliament in the County of Southampton, and Colonel Goring, for and on his own behalf and other the officers and soldiers within the garrison of Portsmouth, for the rendering up of the said town.

First, that the Committee for the Parliament shall this day, being the seventh day of September Anno Domini 1642, at or about six of the clock in the morning, put in two companies of foot in the town of Portsmouth for preventing of disorders and preservation of the magazine.

Secondly, that all such persons as are not of the old garrison, excepting Colonel Goring, the Lord Wentworth, Master Weston, Master Covist, with their ordinary servants, shall forthwith issue out of town, and have free liberty to pass and go wheresoever they please in this kingdom except unto any part of that army raised against the Parliament, with their horses, swords, and pistols, but no other arms, and all other their goods whatsoever, and that they may be allowed twenty days for their journey, they carrying themselves according to the laws, in a peaceable manner.

Thirdly, that Sir Thomas Jervoise, Sir William Waller, who with one servant a piece, and Sergeant-Major Lobbe, shall go into the town to take possession of the stores and several provisions in the town, and that for their security, Master Weston, Master Covist, Lieutenant-Colonel Donnet be delivered as hostages.

Fourthly, that if any of the said persons in the town desire to go beyond the sea, they may have liberty to pass with their proper goods in that town (arms only excepted) without the molestation of any one, and a ship to convey them.

Fifthly, that all officers and soldiers under the Governor that were formerly of this garrison, and now residing in town, shall continue their places, or have three months liberty to sell or otherwise dispose thereof to some other persons, except such as have been put in since the last of July.

Sixthly, that no person whatsoever now residing in town, and who within any time since the first of August hath resided in town, that hath done any act for the keeping, defence, or maintenance thereof, or used any other words in justification of the maintenance thereof, on the behalf of the King's Majesty, shall be questioned or molested.

Seventhly, that such soldiers as are run from their colours to the town shall be excluded out of this treaty.

Eighthly, that there shall be no train left to any mine or to the magazine whereby to blow up the town or endamage the garrison that shall be put into it. And that the Governor, gentlemen of quality, and all the officers of the said town shall discover upon their oaths what they know concerning any such things, and that sufficient hostages be given for performance thereof, who are to be retained two days in the custody of such person as shall be put in the town as Governor.

Ninthly, that carriages shall be provided for the use of such persons as shall issue out of the town, they paying the usual rates for them.

Tenthly, that all prisoners on both sides be released, excepting such as are sent up to London.

Eleventhly, that the Governor shall presently after delivery up of the town, which shall be on Thursday next, by nine of the clock in the morning, have permission from the Committee to despatch such a gentleman to the king as he shall name.

A NOTE ON SOURCES

THE story of the siege has been reconstructed mainly from the miscellaneous reports and news-letters which are preserved in the *Thomason Tracts* collection in the British Library. The Portsmouth Central Library has original copies of three contemporary pamphlets, including the important Royalist *A Declaration of all the Passages at the Taking of Portsmouth*, in which are given the Articles printed as an appendix to this Paper. The *Commons Journal* and the *Lords Journal* both contain valuable supplementary information, and Clarendon's *History of the Rebellion and the Civil Wars in England* is essential for Goring's career and personality. The garrison accounts for 1639–40 are in the British Library (Add. MSS. 33,278). A few important documents are among the Oglander MSS. in the Isle of Wight Record Office, and I am indebted to the late Major Denys Oglander for allowing me to include excerpts from these, and also to Mr E. G. Earl, the former Honorary Archivist, for his help in investigating this source and providing me with relevant photo-copies.

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